

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8337

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PINS SOCI ET

SUBJ: PROVINCIAL DISTURBANCES CONTINUE

REF: ADDIS 3532 AND PREVIOUS

1. RESIDENTS IN PROVINCIAL CENTERS OF AT LEAST EIGHT OF ETHIOPIA'S 14 PROVINCES CONTINUE PRESS FOR REMOVAL/PUNISHMENT OF CURRUPT AND INEFFICIENT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. IN SOME CASES, E.G. ARBA MINCH AND AWASSA, CLASHES WITH POLICE RESULTED IN DEATHS AND INJURIES FOR DEMONSTRATORS. WE HEAR REPORTS THAT LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN NUMBER AREAS BREAKING DOWN AS OFFICIALS REMAIN ABSENT THEIR POSTS OR ARE PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST BY TOWN RESIDENTS. IN JIMA A PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE IS MANAGING TOWN WITH POLICE COOPERATION. IN PAST FEW DAYS MEDIA HAVE CARRIED REPORTS OF LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS IN ADI UGRI, SODO AND GONDAR, IN ADDITION TO THOSE TOWNS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED REFTELS.

2. STUDENTS IN ADDIS AND LOWER HOUSE PARLIAMENT, REFLECTING WIDESPREAD DISSATISFACTION WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS, DEMANDING THAT ALL PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS BE REPLACED. IN
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THREE SESSIONS THIS WEEK PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM KEFFA, ARUSI, GEMU GOFA AND ILLUBABOR IN PARTICULAR WERE OUTSPOKEN IN

EXPRESSING CRITICISM OF LOCAL OFFICIALS DESCRIBED AS "ARROGANT MINI-DICTATORS." NEW MININTERIOR, DEJ. ZEWDE, PROMISED CONSULT CABINET ON THESE PROBLEMS AND TO ADDRESS THEM IN CABINET'S POLICY WHITE PAPER, WHICH STILL UNDER PREPARATION. DEPUTIES' COMPLAINTS INCLUDE EMBEZZLEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS RAISED FOR SELF-HELP PROJECTS; GRANTING OF LAND WHICH WAS TAKEN BY FORCE FROM PEASANTS (DEPUTY FROM GEMU GOFA LISTED OVER 20,000 HECTARES IN HIS PROVINCE GRANTED IMPERIAL FAVORIETS LAST YEAR); POLICE BRUTALITY IN HANDLING PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS; IEG'S INDIFFERENCE TO DROUGHT-RELATED SUFFERING (SEE USINFO 01/1458ZAPR74); IEG RETALIATION TO GALLA ATTACKS IN LAKE REGION.

3. COMMENT: WHILE NATURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT VARIES IN DIFFERENT AREAS, COMMON THEME RUNNING COMPLAINTS NOW BEING VOICED SEEMS TO BE ONE OF LONG-STANDING GOVERNMENT IRRESPONSIBILITY AND EXPLOITATION BY LOCAL OFFICIALS OR URBAN AND RURAL INHABITANTS, PARTICULARLY IF THEY NON-SHOAN AMHARA. (REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND POLITICS PREPARED IN FEBRUARY '74 BY JOHN COHEN FOR AID/W IS MOST COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS AVAILABLE.) DEMANDS FOR REMOVAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRIMARILY GENERATED BY AND CONFINED TO TOWN DWELLERS. AS FAR AS WE AWARE, MOVEMENT HAS NOT YET CATALYZED TRADITIONALLY SUBMISSIVE RURAL PEASANTRY. RECENT "GALLA UPRISING" OVER LAND OWNERSHIP ISSUES HAS REMAINED CENTERED ON RIFT VALLEY LAKE AREA (ADDIS 3037). THERE ARE INDICATIONS, HOWEVER, THAT GALLA SUB-GROUPS ATTEMPTING ORGANIZE AUTONOMY MOVEMENTS. WE NOTE THAT GEN. TADESSE BIRU, LEADER OF 1966 "GALLA REVOLT", ESCAPED HOUSE ARREST LAST MONTH. GALL POLITICIANS ALSO HINTING TO US THAT SOME TYPE PLANS UNDER PREPARATION.

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